

## HUMAN BAIT.

The Man Who Gather Leeches in the Swamps of England.

Pain and lean, he spoke in a low voice, crackling a water cracker: "Divin' is hard work, and sulphur main' is hard work, but how'd you like to be bait at a shillin' a day? That ain't quite a dollar."

"I was human bait for a leech dealer in England all one spring. It was back in the eighties, but I ain't never recovered the healthy color and weight what I lost. I guess I never will now."

"Down Norfolk way I baited—down in the Norfolk broads. Broad's is swamps. All them swamps, together with the mild, moist climate, makes Norfolk a great place for leeches. Me and a dozen other chaps was leech bait."

"We would wade in with our breeches rolled up to our knees, and as soon as we'd feel a leech on our legs we'd tear him off and drop him in a basket slung from the shoulder. Quick as a thug we'd do it, but he'd be considerable cramped out even in that little while. And when a dozen leeches settled on you together the last of 'em by the time you got round to him would be as fat and heavy as a lump of lead, whilst you'd be that much lighter natchery."

"In the late spring the leeches took to deep water. Then the bait had to strip and wade in up to their chins. With all that surface to look after, we played a losing game with the leeches. The quickest of us couldn't stand more'n four hours of it without most faintin' from weakness. And the pain! For some parts of the human bait is mighty sensitive, I tell you."

"The trade's died out now. There's no more call for leeches, and it's a good thing. Bein' bait is too hard on a man. It's worms' work."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

## SAFE BOTH WAYS.

The Way Rajah Birbar Saved His Head by Ready Wit.

Rajah Birbar, a boon companion of the Emperor Akbar, the great contemporary of Queen Elizabeth, was a notable wit. The story goes that the emperor once sent Birbar with a message to the king of Persia.

The latter, for some reason or other, bore a grudge toward the rajah and in order to see him lose the emperor's favor thought of a device.

He asked Birbar: "Which of us two is greater in power and majesty—I or Akbar?" But, mind you, if your answer is in any way unfavorable to me I will order your head to be struck off."

"Your majesty," replied Birbar without loss of time, "is like the full moon, while the emperor, my master, resembles the crescent."

The king was highly pleased with his reply and let him go.

This news was, however, carried to Akbar, who was wild with rage when he heard it. When Birbar returned to his master's court he was asked to explain himself on pain of death.

"My comparison," said Birbar, "meant only this much and nothing more: that the decline of the Persian king's power had commenced, just as the full moon, after it is full, goes on waning, while your majesty is destined to rise on and on till, like the crescent becoming the full moon in time, it will shine forth with magnificent splendor of glory."

The emperor, who was a great patron of wit and wisdom, heaped the rajah with rewards.

## Clerk's Elbow.

"To remove shiny spots from coat sleeves and trousers seats," said a clerk "tell you how it is done."

The sun was strong on him as, upon his lefty stool, he munched his midday sandwich from thin, ink smeared fingers, but on his old clerk's coat and old trousers no shiny spots reflected the light.

"Clerk's elbow" such spots are called," he said. "It's like housemaid's knee. To cure it you soak the glittering spot in cold water for half an hour. Then you take a tassel—that's a very stiff tassel—and you rub the spot with it till a nap or fuzz is raised up. Then with a clothesbrush you lay the nap down the right way, and presto, the shine is gone!"—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

## No Sand in Sandpaper.

"There is no sand in sandpaper," said the manufacturer. "It is powdered glass that does the business. That's where the broken bottles go to." He nodded toward a mass of broken bottles in the yard. "We powder the glass into half a dozen grades," he said. "We coat our paper with an even layer of hot glue. Then without loss of time we spread on the glass powder. Finally we run a wooden roller lightly over the sheets to give them a good surface. When in the past they made sandpaper of sand it wouldn't do a quarter of the work that glass paper does."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

## Bride's Pie Joke.

Her—Richard! You on earth are you cutting your pie with a knife? Him—Because, darling—now, understand, I'm not finding any fault, for I know that these little oversights will occur because you forgot to give me a can opener.—Cleveland Leader.

## She Was On.

Mrs. Booser (3 a. m.)—This is a nice time for you to be coming home. Where have you been? Mr. Booser—Been setting up, my dearest, with a friend. Mrs. Booser—How many drinks did you set up?—Cincinnati Enquirer.

## Friendship consists in being a friend,

not having a friend.—Pittsburg Press.

## Considerate.

Mrs. Dove—Henry, I think you are positively cruel. Here I've tried so hard to cook you a nice dinner and you haven't had a word to say to me about it. Mr. Dove—Darling, I love you too much for that. If I said what I thought, you'd never speak to me again.

## Painfully Economical.

Husband—You are not economical. Wife—Well, if you don't call a woman economical who saves her wedding dress for a possible second marriage, I'd like to know what you think economical is!

## A Monster Musical Instrument.

The most gigantic harp ever constructed, as far as the record goes, was that made by Veritan, the provost of Burkli, near Basel, Switzerland, in 1787. That was a long while ago, but the fame of M. Veritan's gigantic harp was such that it is still occasionally mentioned by writers on the rare and the wonderful, just as the sea serpent, bloody rain, live mastodons, etc., are. M. Veritan's colossal musical instrument was 320 feet in length, and, on that account, was constructed in an open lot instead of in a harp factory. It was most simple in construction, consisting of fifteen wires strung tightly between two poles. These wires were of different sizes, the largest being one-sixth of an inch in diameter and the smallest one-twelfth of an inch. They were stretched north and south and inclined in such a manner as to form an angle of from twenty to thirty degrees with the horizon. This queer instrument was not intended as an exaggerated toy, but was constructed for the express purpose of foretelling changes in the weather, which were calculated by Professor Veritan according to the different tones the instrument made when the wind was blowing through it.

## As You Please.

In the ancient times there lived a wonderfully wise man, of whom it was said that he could answer correctly any question put to him. There was one, however, who thought himself clever enough to outwit the sage. This man took a poor, captive bird and clasped it so closely in his hand that only the head and tail were visible.

"Tell me," said he to the renowned guesser of riddles, "in the bird which I hold in my hand alive or dead?"

If the answer was "Dead," thought this artful plotter, he would just open his hand and let the bird fly. If the answer was "Alive," he would with only a little squeeze crush the poor bird to death.

But the wise man proved himself equal to the occasion and replied, "It is as you please."

Each one holds within his or her grasp the fair bird of life. Which is it to be? A blessing or a baner? It is "as you please."

## Pressed to Death.

An English court has sentenced a woman to imprisonment because she refused to speak during a trial. The old penalty for remaining mute under similar conditions was being pressed to death. The form of sentence set forth "the prisoner shall be laid in some low, dark house, where he shall lie naked on the earth and one arm shall be drawn to one quarter of the house with a cord and the other arm to another quarter, and in the same manner let it be done with his legs, and let there be laid upon his body iron and stones, as much as he can bear or move." There the man had to lie. On the following day he was given three morsels of bread without water, on the following water, but no bread. And this was his diet until he died.

## Great Discovery.

The editor of a Kansas paper states that he once borrowed a Winchester rifle and started up the street a few days after to deliver the weapon to its owner. The delinquent subscribers got it into their heads that he was on the warpath, and every one he met started on paying what he owed him. One man wiped out a debt of ten years' standing. On his return to his office he found a load of hay, fifteen bushels of corn, ten bushels of potatoes, a load of wood and a barrel of turps that had been brought in. We would like to borrow a Winchester for a day or two. —St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

## A Disadvantage of Health.

A visitor among the poor of the east end of London found unexpected testimony to the disadvantages of health in one of his calls. Mrs. B. had a family of a dozen children, and, like most of her class, she had her tale of woe to tell. "How are the children, Mrs. B.?" inquired the caller. "All very well, indeed, sir; very well, indeed," was the answer. "You ought to be thankful, I'm sure, with so much sickness about." "Yes, sir; I suppose I ought to be thankful; but I tell you, when they're well they eat an awful lot."

## Java's Population.

Java is very thickly populated, and cultivation is pushed to an extraordinary distance up the steep slopes of the hills. The plain of Lalen in the month of July "is one sea of ripe golden rice, with here and there a village of brown thatched roofs nestling in a group of green coconut trees." In the middle of the island white chimneys of sugar mills peep above miles and miles of sugarcane fields.

## Fire and Water.

Why does water put out fire? Water reduces the temperature of the flame below the point of ignition; therefore it cuts the flame off. Water does not smother the flames even when the burning brand is completely immersed in a tank of water, because the first contact puts out the fire—that is, reduces the temperature of the flame below point of ignition.

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